

NATIONAL CANNERS ASSOCIATION



Information Letter



FOR N. C. A. MEMBERS

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Enforcement of New German Regulations Postponed

The effective date of the new German foodstuffs regulations as applied to imported goods has been postponed from April 1 to July 1, according to a cablegram received by the Department of Commerce on March 28. These regulations were summarized and discussed in the Information Letters for Nov. 12 and March 24.

Freight Rates from Milwaukee to Southeast

Rates on canned vegetables, in carloads, from Milwaukee and other Wisconsin points to Montgomery, Ala., have been found unreasonable and unduly prejudicial in a decision of the Interstate Commerce Commission, which has prescribed reasonable rates for the future. The Commission's decision requires the establishment, on or before May 29, of rates which shall not exceed the following: From Milwaukee, 71 cents per 100 pounds; from Chetek, 84 cents; from Bangor, Baraboo, Berlin, Elkhart Lake, Green Bay, Lancaster, Oakfield, Oconto, Oostburg, Readville, Sparta, Theresa and Wausau, 79 cents.

The carriers are also required to eliminate the preference existing in the relationship between the rates from these Wisconsin points to Alabama and those from the same points to Meridian, Miss., and Mobile, Ala., and are required to establish and maintain rates to Montgomery which shall not exceed the contemporaneous rates from these points to Meridian, Miss., by more than 2 cents, and which shall not be higher than 5 cents under the contemporaneous rates from the same points to Mobile.

Statistics on Stocks of Corn, Peas and Tomatoes

On March 24 the Association mailed to all members a circular giving the stocks of canned corn, peas and tomatoes in the hands of canners and distributors, except retailers, on December 31, 1927, as compiled by Census Bureau. In this circular were also given comparisons of these stocks with the packs in recent years. The Census totals on stocks represented cases of all sizes of cans; the pack statistics were in standard cases.

The Census Bureau's detailed report, which became available later and which was mailed to all members on March 26, furnished figures on the pack of the different sizes of cans, so that it is possible to reduce the stock statistics to standard cases. In the following table are shown the pack of canned corn, peas and tomatoes in the years 1923 to 1927, inclusive, and the stocks on December 31, 1927, reduced to standard cases. There are also given the average annual pack for the ten years 1918 to 1927, five years 1923 to 1927, and three years 1924 to 1926.

	Corn Standard cases No. 2	Peas Standard cases No. 2	Tomatoes Standard cases No. 3
1923	14,106,000	13,948,000	14,672,000
1924	12,131,000	19,315,000	12,519,000
1925	24,320,000	17,816,000	19,770,000
1926	19,069,000	17,709,000	9,455,000
1927	10,346,680	12,936,017	13,137,042
Stocks, Dec. 31, 1927	12,143,460	11,424,544	9,209,089
1918-1927, average	12,316,807	13,503,817	14,054,654
1923-1927, average	15,994,536	16,344,803	13,910,608
1924-1926, average	18,507,000	18,280,000	13,914,700

Canned Food Exports in February

In February of the present year, as compared with the corresponding month last year, there were large increases in exports of evaporated milk and canned peaches and pineapple, a good gain in canned vegetables, and large decreases in pears, salmon and sardines. The detailed figures follow:

	February, 1927		February, 1928	
	Pounds	Value	Pounds	Value
Canned meats, total ..	1,475,906	\$513,920	1,502,832	\$528,426
Beef	299,314	95,914	212,123	74,325
Sausage	334,616	102,182	228,488	72,597
Canned vegetables, total	5,149,031	454,842	6,079,913	533,869
Condensed milk	2,853,406	431,705	2,645,400	403,774
Evaporated milk	4,331,316	448,231	7,530,505	781,997
Canned fruits, total....	20,288,138	1,919,503	24,581,222	2,236,780
Apricots	2,029,311	203,271	2,696,507	263,248
Peaches	5,853,330	539,508	9,363,463	734,558
Pears	7,316,372	714,580	5,299,781	567,734
Pineapple	1,767,682	179,104	4,410,839	419,615
Salmon	8,392,049	1,380,381	2,143,825	463,107
Sardines	14,339,564	1,221,362	7,807,022	613,969

Imports of Milk Powder and Tomato Products

Imports of milk powder, canned tomatoes and tomato paste during February, as compared with the same month in 1927, have been announced by the Department of Commerce as follows:

	February, 1927		February, 1928	
	Pounds	Value	Pounds	Value
Whole milk powder	145,126	\$33,524	384,361	\$64,413
Skimmed milk powder . .	4,480	484	73,189	5,501
Canned tomatoes	5,489,552	314,841	7,909,498	446,298
Tomato paste	936,467	98,369	583,266	56,268

Tri-State Packers Spring Meeting

The Spring meeting of the Tri-State Packers Association will be held at the Rennert Hotel in Baltimore on Thursday and Friday, April 12 and 13.

Movement of Mexican West Coast Vegetables

Shipments of Mexican West Coast vegetables into the United States through Nogales, Sonora, from the beginning of the season in November, 1927, to February 29, 1928, amounted to 2,099 carloads, as against 2,296 carloads during the corresponding period last season, according to statistics received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Consul Henry C. A. Damm at Nogales.

The decline in shipments to the American market is accounted for entirely by the great reduction in shipments of tomatoes, which during the first four months of the current season have amounted to only 960 carloads as against 1,459 carloads during the corresponding period last season, a decline of about 35 per cent. This decline has been offset to a large extent by increased shipments of mixed vegetables, containing in addition to tomatoes, green peas and peppers such items as egg plant, green beans, cucumbers, squash and okra. A total of 126 carloads of mixed vegetables have been shipped thus far this season as against only 1 carload during the corresponding period last year. Shipments of green peas thus far this season show an increase of 61 carloads over those for the corresponding period last year, while green peppers are 116 carloads larger.

Maine Blueberry Pack in 1927

Statistics on the pack of blueberries in 1927 have been issued by the Maine Department of Agriculture, based upon reports furnished by all of the concerns that put up blueberries in that state. The 1927 pack was considerably larger than in 1926,

and the amount received by blueberry producers increased accordingly, totaling \$856,851 as compared with \$610,581 in 1926. The following table summarizes the statistics for 1927, and the preceding three years:

	1924	1925	1926	1927
Bushels of blueberries bought				
by canners	98,473	157,272	169,136	239,666
Price paid per bushel	\$3.00	\$3.37	\$3.61	\$3.16
Cases packed:				
No. 10	86,001	146,694	150,244	228,812
No. 2	17,356	21,971	33,729	47,119

Canned Food Rates in Central, Illinois and Western Trunk Line Territory

Changes proposed in the rates in and between Central, Illinois and Western Trunk Line territories by the general cancellation of all less-than-carload commodity rates and of certain carload commodity rates have been found justified only in part by the Interstate Commerce Commission, which has issued an appropriate order for the cancellation of certain of the schedules and for the filing of others in accordance with its findings.

The carriers proposed, among other things, to cancel commodity rates on canned fruits, vegetables and condensed or evaporated milk, in carloads, leaving applicable the fifth-class rates. No objection was made by shippers to the proposed cancellation of commodity rates on less-than-carload shipments of canned goods, and the Commission found such cancellation justified. As regards the carload rates, the Commission's report states:

"While we do not regard fifth class, or 35 per cent of first class, as unreasonable for application on these canned goods, in carloads, under ordinary circumstances; in view of the present condition of the industry, the commodity rates that would remain in effect, and other facts shown by the record, we are of the opinion that the carriers have not justified the proposed increases in the carload rates on canned goods in this proceeding."

Classification Changes Proposed in Western Territory

Increase of the present less-than-carload rating of third class in Western Classification territory on canned vegetables in glass or earthenware packed in crates to first class, and increase of the present fourth class ratings on canned vegetables packed in glass or earthenware in barrels or boxes to second class is proposed in Docket No. 33 of the Consolidated Classification Committee.

Hearings will be held before the various Classification Committees as follows: New York City, April 10; Chicago, April 17; Atlanta, Ga., April 25.

Truck Crop Notes

The acreage of carrots for the spring crop in 1928 is estimated by the California Cooperative Crop Reporting Service at 18,760 acres, compared with 21,500 in 1927.

Harvest of Alameda and Santa Clara peas has started, and from indications on March 19 production may be twice that of last year.

Car Loadings

Revenue freight loadings for the week ended March 17 totaled 942,086 cars, a decrease of 9,467 cars from the preceding week and a decrease of 59,846 cars below the same week in 1927.

Pending Legislation

The United States Senate on March 27 passed over to the next call of the calendar the bill (S. 2148) fixing standards for hampers and round stave baskets, after adopting an amendment providing for the inclusion of the five-eighth bushel basket or hamper in the list of standard containers.

The Senate also passed over the bill (S. 2832) providing for horticultural experiments and demonstration work in the Southern Great Plains area, the bill (S. 1285) providing for the further development of agricultural extension work between the agricultural colleges in the several states, and the bill (S. 2149) authorizing and directing the Secretary of Agriculture to investigate all phases of crop insurance.

The Senate on March 29 passed the bill making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture (H. R. 11577) for the year beginning July 1. The Senate added about \$1,750,000 to the amount appropriated in the bill as it passed the House. Among the increases that will be of interest to canners were \$15,000 for publication of a handbook on fruit and vegetable diseases, \$10,000 for investigation of peach tree diseases, \$20,000 for investigating methods of growing, harvesting and handling fruits, \$13,000 for investigations relative to the spoilage of canned foods, metallic poisons, etc.

The Corn Borer Bill

After three days of continuous hearings and conferences, the House Committee on Agriculture completed hearings on the Purnell Bill and announced an executive session for the further consideration of the bill on March 30. At the conclusion of the hearings the following memorandum was presented by Congressman Purnell embodying a plan of procedure which is approved by the Department of Agriculture, the European

Corn Borer Committee, the regulatory officials of the several states involved and also by such opponents of the Purnell Bill as were present at the hearings.

"The purpose of the Purnell Bill is to prevent spread of the corn borer. The plan is to compensate the farmer within such areas as shall be determined by the Secretary of Agriculture as necessary, for extra labor necessary in the clean-up of the corn fields, and for the state and federal forces to clean up areas which the farmers fail to handle. It was proposed to carry forward the fight against the corn borer during the spring of 1928. Now it develops that Ohio has failed to include under control regulations most of the 1927 area of spread. This means that the plan for the control of the spread of the borer during the early summer is seriously impaired. It seems too late to issue regulations covering this territory. These people have been told that they would not be required to clean up the corn fields during this spring. Many have sowed wheat and oats in the corn fields.

"The hearings on the Purnell Bill have been delayed. The season is fast advancing and farmers are now plowing and seeding in parts of the infested area. By the time this bill can be passed and the appropriation made available a large part of the farming operations will have been completed. It will be too late to perfect an organization, issue regulations and complete the clean-up of the corn borer infested area in any effective way during the spring of 1928.

"It is proposed that the Purnell Bill be passed and the appropriation provided for a corn borer clean-up campaign during the fall of 1928 and the season of 1929. This plan will permit an early announcement of regulations covering the infested area and will protect the interests of the farmers in the area. It will include provision for clean-up in the fall months which is most important. At this season some of the most effective work can be done in properly harvesting the crop, cleaning land subject to flood, and preparing land for wheat and other crops. The farmers will have a definite program and can plan their work accordingly.

"It will also be possible for the interested states to agree with the United States Department of Agriculture on a uniform program for quarantine and clean-up work."

Chicago Convention Broke All Hotel Records

Sundry guesses have been made by those attending the Chicago Convention as to the number of guests at the Stevens

Hotel, the headquarters of the Allied Associations. The high mark, according to the hotel management, was reached on Tuesday of convention week, when the Stevens had 4,640 guests.

The Frequency of Botulism

The Journal of the American Medical Association for March 10 contained an article on the frequency of botulism, summarizing the data for 1926 and earlier years, and giving details with respect to the outbreaks in 1927. The same issue of the Journal also contained an editorial on the same subject.

In its article on outbreaks of botulism the Journal stated:

In a report on outbreaks of botulism for 1926, the data were thus summarized:

There have been reported in the United States and Canada from 1899 to 1927, and including one outbreak from England and one from Argentina, 151 outbreaks, or a total of 518 cases with 357 deaths, giving a case mortality of 67 per cent; fifty-five outbreaks have been proved toxicologically and bacteriologically. If there is taken an eight-year period, from 1918 to 1925, inclusive, an average of approximately thirteen outbreaks has occurred annually.

The accompanying table includes all proved and clinically probable outbreaks of botulism that have occurred in 1927.

It will be noted that only five outbreaks occurred in 1927, when the expectancy average was thirteen. It is decidedly interesting to note that all outbreaks were due to home-canned foods. The food involved in two outbreaks was home-canned corn; in two, home-canned string beans, and in the remaining outbreak, home-canned pears.

All the outbreaks reported occurred in western states. This is in accordance with established epidemiologic facts that the distribution of the spore of *B. botulinus* in the soils of western states is wide, and the number of outbreaks of botulism may be in direct ratio to this distribution and the safety of the canning methods used, particularly in the home, for fish, meat and vegetables, such as corn and string beans, and fruit, such as olives and apparently also pears.

Cases of Botulism Reported in 1927

Causative Food	Method of Preparation	Persons Ill	Deaths	Location	Type Demonstrated	Comment
1. String beans	Home canned	3	2	Rocky Ford, Colo.	No laboratory examination	Spilled
2. Corn	Home canned	1	1	Ono, Shasta Co., Calif.	Type A	Spilled
3. Pears	Home canned	2	2	Los Banos, Calif.	Type A	Spilled
4. String beans	Home canned	1	1	San Francisco	Type A	Spilled
5. Corn	Home canned	4	4	Near Plevna, Montana	Type A	Spilled

Outbreaks 1, 2, 3 and 4 are from the records of Dr. K. F. Meyer, Hooper Foundation, University of California; outbreaks 5, from records of Montana State Board of Health, Dr. W. F. Cogswell, secretary, and Dr. Glen D. Wiles, director of division of food and drugs.

Spoilage of the food consumed was visibly present in four outbreaks; and in the fifth (home-canned corn, Montana) this was probably also true, as the home-canned corn was made into a soup by a child and other jars of the corn, as likewise those of home-canned string beans and home-canned peas found in the home, indicated spoilage. Moreover, the laboratory examinations of the content of other jars of the home-canned corn revealed them to be toxic and to contain toxic strains of *B. botulinus*.

In the United States and Canada from 1899 to 1928, including one outbreak from England and one from Argentina, 156 outbreaks have been reported, a total of 529 cases with 357 deaths, giving a case mortality of approximately 67.5 per cent. Fifty-nine outbreaks have been proved toxicologically and bacteriologically.

In commenting editorially on the foregoing report, the *Journal states*:

Elsewhere in this issue is a report on the frequency of botulism, with a summary of outbreaks for 1927. A study of the data now available again points out the total inadequacy of some of the heat processes that are being used in home canning, particularly in western states. In the Montana outbreak due to home-canned corn in the series of 1927, almost an entire family was blotted out. Numerous other glass jars of home-canned vegetables in this home were proved spoiled and toxic or contaminated with toxic strains of *B. botulinus*. The interesting thing in this outbreak was the fact that the corn was served in soup and apparently heated. The point has often been stressed particularly for home canners in western states who may use insufficient heat processes without considering altitude, that vegetables, meat and fish so canned must be boiled thoroughly before being consumed and after being removed from the can or glass jar. In connection one may well censure Farmers' Bulletin 1471 of the United States Department of Agriculture, which does not contain an adequate warning against canning nonacid products at the boiling point of water, but implies that that temperature may be used when a proper pressure method is not available. In the light of these outbreaks, it may not be unwise to suggest that state boards of health, particularly those of western states, investigate and attempt to regulate the processes being used in the home canning of nonacid foods in their respective communities. Perhaps the most encouraging sign in this report is the absence of any cases attributed to commercially canned food. In fact, none have been reported since early in 1925, practically a three-year period. For a number of years the commercial canning industry has realized its responsibility to the public by performing and supporting research. As a result, sterilizing processes have been carefully standardized, and apparently this industry is being safely conducted from the standpoint of public health.